

Service Date: July 13, 1988

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the Matter of the Investigation)	UTILITY DIVISION
of Mountain Bell Service in the)	DOCKET NO. 88.5.12
Lavina Exchange.)	ORDER NO. 5347
_____)	

Background

1. On November 23, 1987, the Public Service Commission (Commission) received a petition from residents of the Town of Lavina, Montana and the surrounding area requesting an improvement of the telephone equipment used by Mountain Bell to serve the area. Specifically, the petition requested automatic number identification (ANI) in their exchange.

2. On January 4, 1988, the Commission received a letter from Mountain Bell in response to the petition. Mountain Bell stated that it cannot identify a particular pattern of trouble in the Lavina exchange. After contacting several customers who reported trouble dialing and delays in dial tone, Mountain Bell scheduled a complete maintenance routine of the Lavina office. Mountain Bell confirmed that the Lavina office does not have ANI, but stated that the cost to equip the Lavina office with ANI would be \$80,000 to \$100,000.

Discussion

3. The petition the Commission received from the Lavina residents had 69 signatures. Mountain Bell has 122 customers in the exchange. This indicates over 50% of the customers may be dissatisfied with Mountain Bell's service in this area.

4. The lack of ANI means that customers in the Lavina exchange must go through an operator every time they use 1+ dialing for long distance calls. Customers gives the operator the number from which they are calling for billing purposes. The Commission has no knowledge of whether this results in a higher number of billing errors and billing inquiries than in exchanges with ANI.

FINDINGS

5. The Commission finds that this petition warrants further investigation and will proceed in two areas. First the Commission will schedule a public hearing in the Lavina area to get further input from customers concerning problems and needs in the area.

6. Second, the Commission will require Mountain Bell to file written responses to the following questions no later than August 1, 1988.

- a. What would it entail to add ANI capability to the Lavina central office? Provide the associated costs and all backup documentation.
- b. What savings would Mountain Bell experience in operator costs? Quantify the savings and provide backup documentation.
- c. What would it cost to change out the Lavina central office. Discuss the possibilities of using a remote

switching arrangement or placing a used switch in the Lavina exchange.

d. What decision making criteria does Mountain Bell use on switch replacements? When would the Lavina switch be changed out under this criteria?

CONCLUSION OF LAW

1. Mountain Bell offers regulated telecommunications services in the state of Montana and is a public utility under Section 69-3-103, MCA. The Commission has authority to supervise, regulate, and control public utilities. Section 69-3-102, MCA.

ORDER

1. Mountain Bell will file responses to the inquiries set forth in the Findings of this Order no later than August 1, 1988.

2. The Commission staff will schedule a public hearing to be held in Lavina, Montana.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION at Helena, Montana this 11th day of July, 1988, by a 5 - 0 vote.

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CLYDE JARVIS, Chairman

HOWARD L. ELLIS, Commissioner

TOM MONAHAN, Commissioner

DANNY OBERG, Commissioner

JOHN B. DRISCOLL, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Carol A. Frasier
Commission Secretary

{SEAL}

NOTE: Any interested party may request that the Commission reconsider this decision. A motion to reconsider must be filed within ten (10) days. See 38.2.4806, ARM.